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UNCLAS SANTIAGO 001594

SIPDIS

STATE FOR IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA
AMEMBASSY FOR PAO, IO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAQ](#) [CI](#) [VE](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION -

On July 27, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 116,807) carried an editorial "Chavista Agitation." Quote:

"Hugo Chavez is trying to expand his "Bolivarian Revolution" beyond Venezuela's borders...by trying to impose his leadership on other Latin American leaders-- except Lula da Silva in Brazil and Fidel Castro, whom he has called 'brothers' --and by supporting indigenous communities on the continent that promote armed struggle.... The main target of Chavez' international attack is the U.S. government, which he defies with his oil policy and by proclaiming that his armed forces are anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist.... He accompanies this belligerence with a massive weapons purchase, the creation of a 'Territorial Guard' formed of armed civilians...plans to expand the military reserves to two million...and by announcing the expropriation of over one thousand private companies.... To this he adds the strengthening of the agrarian reform...and the reform of Central Bank laws to permit access to USD six billion of international reserves."

KELLY